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Employment Bulletin

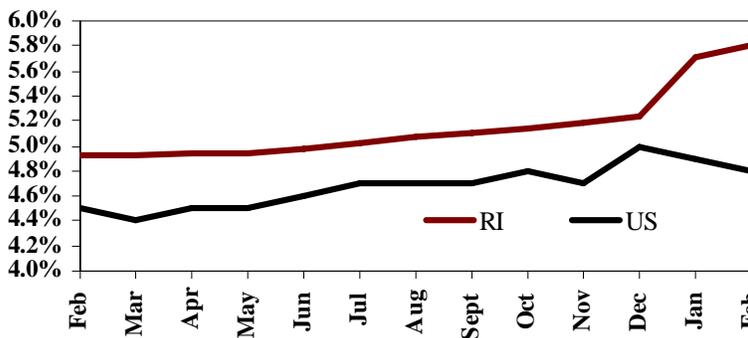
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March 2008

RI's Unemployment Rate Inches Up in February

- ◆ RI's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in February 2008 ticked up 0.1 of a percentage point to 5.8 percent, the highest since November 1995 (5.8%).
- ◆ The state's jobless rate is 0.9 of a percentage point above last February's figure of 4.9 percent.
- ◆ RI's jobless rate again surpassed the national unemployment rate, which inched down 0.1 of a percentage point in February to 4.8 percent.
- ◆ In February, the number of unemployed RI residents climbed to 33,400, reflecting a monthly increase of 500 and a year-over-year increase of 5,000.
- ◆ The number of employed RI residents totaled 537,700 in February, representing a decline of 4,100 over the previous month. On a year-over-year basis, the number of employed RI residents dropped 12,100 between February 2007 and February 2008.

RI & US Unemployment Rates
Seasonally Adjusted 2007-2008



WorkShare: Helping RI Employers Avoid Layoffs

Employers experiencing a temporary slowdown in business have an alternative to layoffs, thanks to the RI Department of Labor and Training's WorkShare program. WorkShare allows employers to keep employees on the payroll by having all workers in a department or unit share reduced work hours. The workers then can collect a percentage of Unemployment Insurance benefits for up to 52 weeks. By retaining these workers, employers retain a skilled workforce and avoid a disruption of business operations. And, by participating in WorkShare, employees keep their jobs, their benefits and their economic security.

To be eligible for WorkShare, a unit must cut its normal weekly hours by at least 10 percent but no more than 50 percent. The reduction in hours must be spread equally among all employees in an affected department or unit. A WorkShare plan can apply only to employees who normally work 30 to 40 hours per week, and may not serve as a subsidy for intermittent employment or seasonal employment during the off-season.

For more information on WorkShare, visit www.dlt.ri.gov/ui/WS on the web or call (401) 243-9177.

Business Expo 2008: Knowledge. Power. Opportunity.

The Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce's 19th Annual Business EXPO will take place Tuesday, May 6 and Wednesday, May 7 at the Rhode Island Convention Center. With a theme of "Knowledge. Power. Opportunity." this year's event will provide event exhibitors and attendees access to a broad and powerful knowledge base, successful business practices and top notch decision makers. (Continued on page 4)

Seasonally Adjusted Labor Force Statistics

(in thousands)

	Rhode Island			United States		
	Feb 08	Jan 08	Feb 07	Feb 08	Jan 08	Feb 07
Civilian Labor Force	571.1	574.6	578.3	153,374	153,824	152,725
Resident Employment	537.7	541.8	549.8	145,993	146,248	145,888
Unemployment	33.4	32.9	28.4	7,381	7,576	6,837
Unemployment Rate	5.8%	5.7%	4.9%	4.8%	4.9%	4.5%

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RI's Job Count Continues to Decline

The number of seasonally adjusted non-farm jobs in Rhode Island declined by 1,200 in February 2008, reducing the number of jobs to 487,800. This represents the lowest job count since April 2004 (486,200). From January to February of 2008, employment losses were reported in the Professional & Business Services (-500), Construction (-400), and Retail Trade (-400) sectors. Small losses of 100 each were noted in the Manufacturing; Financial Activities; and Arts, Entertainment & Recreation sectors. Government jobs were also down (-200) over the month.

Job losses in the Professional & Business Services sector are largely the result of reductions among Temporary Help agencies. Specialty Trades Contractors accounted for most of the decline in the Construction sector. Within Retail Trade, job losses were evident in Department Stores.

The month's employment decreases were partially offset by job gains of 300 in the Educational Services and of 100 each in the Transportation & Utilities, Health Care & Social Assistance, and Other Services sectors. Employment remained unchanged in the Natural Resources & Mining, Wholesale Trade, Information, and Accommodation & Food Services sectors.

From February 2007 to February 2008, RI jobs declined 7,700, a 1.6 percent decrease. The largest annual employment losses in Rhode Island occurred in the Manufacturing (-2,400), Construction (-2,200), Professional & Business Services (-2,100) and Financial Activities (-1,500) sectors. Educational Services experienced the largest over-the-year gain (+900). Other gains

were noted in Health Care & Social Assistance (+800), Information (+500) and Accommodation & Food Services (+100). Natural Resources & Mining and Transportation & Utilities remained unchanged over the year.

In February 2008, production workers in the Manufacturing sector earned \$13.87 per hour. The average hourly production wage was down 11 cents per hour from January and up 37 cents per hour from a year ago. Manufacturing employees worked an average of 38.3 hours per week in February, down 0.3 of an hour over the month and 1.0 hour since February 2007.

Establishment Employment in Rhode Island Seasonally Adjusted

	Net Change From				
	Feb-08	Jan-08	Feb-07	Jan-08	Feb-07
Total Nonfarm	487.8	489.0	495.5	-1.2	-7.7
Natural Resources & Mining	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0
Construction	20.7	21.1	22.9	-0.4	-2.2
Manufacturing	49.3	49.4	51.7	-0.1	-2.4
Wholesale Trade*	16.8	16.8	17.2	0.0	-0.4
Retail Trade	51.0	51.4	51.9	-0.4	-0.9
Transportation & Utilities	10.9	10.8	10.9	0.1	0.0
Information	10.9	10.9	10.4	0.0	0.5
Financial Activities	34.1	34.2	35.6	-0.1	-1.5
Professional & Business Services	54.6	55.1	56.7	-0.5	-2.1
Educational Services	24.1	23.8	23.2	0.3	0.9
Health Care & Social Assistance	76.5	76.4	75.7	0.1	0.8
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	7.8	7.9	8.0	-0.1	-0.2
Accommodation & Food Services	43.3	43.3	43.2	0.0	0.1
Other Services	23.2	23.1	23.3	0.1	-0.1
Government	64.4	64.6	64.6	-0.2	-0.2

* State Calculated Estimate

Manufacturing Employment in Rhode Island Not Seasonally Adjusted

	Employment				
	(in thousands)			Net Change From	
	Feb 08	Jan 08	Feb 07	Jan 08	Feb 07
Manufacturing	49.2	49.2	51.5	0	-2,300
Durable Goods	32.0	32.1	33.4	-100	-1,400
Fabricated Metal Product Mfg.	6.7	6.7	7.1	0	-400
Computer & Electronic Product Mfg.	4.3	4.3	4.6	0	-300
Miscellaneous Manufacturing	9.0	9.1	9.6	-100	-600
Jewelry & Silverware	6.3	6.3	6.7	0	-400
Non-Durable Goods	17.2	17.1	18.1	100	-900
Chemical Manufacturing	4.2	4.2	4.5	0	-300
Plastics & Rubber Products Mfg.	2.9	2.9	3.0	0	-100

The employment figures in this section are derived from a survey of businesses in Rhode Island and measure the number of jobs in the state. Not seasonally adjusted total nonfarm employment data is available at: www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi/ces.htm. Current month's figures are preliminary and subject to change.



Wellness Programs in the Ocean State

Employee wellness programs continue to grow in popularity nationwide and Rhode Island is no exception. Approximately 10 percent of Rhode Island companies offer some type of wellness program to their employees. Wellness programs are a simple and effective way for companies to increase the fitness of and improve the overall mental and physical health of their workforce. Wellness programs have the potential of benefiting both the employee and the employer. Employers could potentially see significant savings as a direct result of successful wellness programs. Healthy and happy employees result in fewer employee absences, higher productivity, increased morale, better employee retention, and possibly lower health care costs.

Wellness programs include numerous strategies to promote employee health. Of the Rhode Island employers who offer wellness programs, nearly 80 percent offer programs that focus on physical activity (ie. gyms, walking clubs, and sports teams). Over half of the employers offer nutrition and diet counseling and nearly thirty percent offer programs that promote smoking cessation or stress management.

Wellness program accessibility varies greatly depending on industry and firm size. Employers in the Finance & Insurance industry sector were the most likely to offer wellness programs. Employers within the Accommodation & Food Services (2.0%) sectors were least likely to offer wellness programs to their employees. Less than 10 percent of smaller employers (those with less than 20 employees) offer wellness programs to their workers. In contrast, 60 percent of larger employers (more than 100 employees) offer this benefit. It is estimated that more than 40 percent of Rhode Island workers are employed by companies that offer wellness programs.

Employer Provided Wellness Programs

Physical Activity	78.2%
Nutrition and Diet Counseling	60.6%
Stress Management	29.9%
Smoking Cessation	29.8%
Seat Belt Safety	14.5%

Results based on data collected from a sample of 2,000 employers with 3 or more employees selected for the 2007 Employee Benefits Survey.

Characteristics of the Insured Unemployed

In February 2008, 51 percent of Rhode Island's unemployed workers were eligible to collect Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits. Numbering 19,355 people, these "insured unemployed" accounted for 3.7 percent of the state's total employed (unadjusted). Nearly 19 percent (3,633) of the Ocean State's insured unemployed faced long-term unemployment, defined as collecting unemployment benefits for more than fourteen weeks.

On an industry basis, 22.9 percent (4,439) of the state's insured unemployed workers came from the Construction sector. There were also 2,747 individuals with an attachment to the Administrative & Waste Services sector, accounting for 14.2 percent of all insured unemployed workers. An additional 12.2 percent (2,365) of those collecting UI benefits in February had worked in the Manufacturing sector. Large numbers of insured unemployed were also reported in Retail Trade (1,707), Accommodation & Food Services (1,450) and Health Care & Social Assistance (1,003). For more information, go to www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi/uiadmin/characteristics.htm.

Characteristics of the Insured Unemployed, February 2008

	Total	Long-Term	Percent Long-Term
Total	19,355	3,633	18.8%
Male	12,673	1,881	14.8%
Female	6,682	1,752	26.2%
Selected Industries	19,355	3,633	18.8%
Construction	4,439	325	7.3%
Manufacturing	2,365	577	24.4%
Wholesale Trade	702	169	24.1%
Retail Trade	1,707	454	26.6%
Transportation & Warehousing	419	70	16.7%
Information	165	41	24.8%
Finance & Insurance	946	398	42.1%
Real Estate	316	95	30.1%
Professional & Tech. Services	608	168	27.6%
Administrative & Waste Services	2,747	259	9.4%
Educational Services	163	64	39.3%
Health Care & Social Assistance	1,003	365	36.4%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	779	90	11.6%
Accommodation & Food Services	1,450	263	18.1%
Other Services	512	122	23.8%
Public Administration	116	39	33.6%

Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers

				% Change
	Feb 08	Jan 08	Feb 07	Prev. Year
All Items	211.7	211.1	203.5	4.0%

Source: U.S. Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics

Child Labor Laws

The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (DLT) Labor Standards Unit strives to protect all workers—including children.

In Rhode Island, a child must be a minimum of 14 years of age to work legally. Underage workers have a variety of restrictions on their job descriptions and hours. For example, a youth age 16 or 17 can work no more than 48 hours per week or nine hours each day. Youth age 14 or 15 can work no more than 40 hours per week or eight hours each day. And, all students must have a minimum eight-hour break between the end of one work shift and the start of another.

All underage employees are prohibited from hazardous job activities, including excavating, roofing and demolition. They are also not allowed to use power-driven machinery, including power-driven meat slicers, bakery machines, landscaping tools and other manufacturing-related machinery.

Children ages 14 and 15 have additional restrictions on their work activities. They may not work as dock employees or parking lot attendants. And, they may not serve food or beverages, dispense gasoline, wash outdoor windows, or engage in activity using ladders or scaffolding.

RI employers must fill out an *Intention to Employ a Minor* form if they wish to hire a child age 14 and 15. The Department of Labor and Training also recommends that this form be completed for hires ages 16 and 17. Children ages 14 and 15 who wish to work must present an *Intention to Employ* form, along with other identifying information, to their local school department in order to obtain a *Special Limited Permit to Work*. Similarly, those ages 16 and 17 can use the *Intention to Employ* form to obtain a *Certificate of Age*.

For more information on Child Labor Laws in Rhode Island, or on obtaining work permits for minors, visit the DLT web site at www.dlt.ri.gov and click on the Child Labor Laws link. To report a violation of Child Labor Laws, call Labor Standards at (401) 462-8550.

City & Town Unadjusted Unemployment Rates for February

	2008	2007		2008	2007
Barrington	4.1	3.8	Newport	7.0	5.7
Bristol	6.3	5.0	North Kingstown	5.7	4.5
Burrillville	6.9	5.7	North Providence	6.1	5.1
Central Falls	8.7	7.0	North Smithfield	5.8	4.9
Charlestown	7.3	5.6	Pawtucket	7.4	6.0
Coventry	6.6	5.1	Portsmouth	5.6	4.7
Cranston	6.4	5.2	Providence	7.5	6.1
Cumberland	6.1	4.8	Richmond	4.2	3.5
East Greenwich	6.2	4.5	Scituate	7.4	5.9
East Providence	7.0	6.0	Smithfield	5.5	4.8
Exeter	6.2	5.8	South Kingstown	5.8	5.1
Foster	8.2	6.7	Tiverton	7.7	6.5
Glocester	5.5	4.7	Warren	6.6	6.2
Hopkinton	7.3	5.9	Warwick	6.2	5.0
Jamestown	4.9	4.2	West Greenwich	6.0	4.7
Johnston	7.6	6.5	West Warwick	7.2	6.2
Lincoln	6.0	4.5	Westerly	6.0	5.4
Little Compton	7.1	5.4	Woonsocket	7.6	6.5
Middletown	6.6	5.4			
Narragansett	4.7	3.6	State of R.I.	6.7	5.5
New Shoreham	15.5	14.6	United States	5.2	4.9

Business Expo 2008: Knowledge. Power. Opportunity.

(Continued from page 1)

This year's show will focus on giving local business professionals a wide array of dynamic and practical tools that can immediately be implemented. From nationally known experts who will talk about key business issues including networking, marketing and customer focused selling, to hearing from local business leaders who are new to the marketplace, Business Expo 2008 is shaping up to be the most informative yet.

For more information, contact the Providence Chamber of Commerce at 401-521-5000.

Unemployment Insurance Claims Activity

	Feb 2008	Jan 2008	Feb 2007	% Change		Year to Date		
				Jan 08	Feb 07	2008	2007	% Change
Initial Claims	9,169	11,475	7,535	-20.1%	21.7%	20,644	17,740	16.4%
Number of Payments	75,150	73,155	64,752	2.7%	16.1%	148,305	134,351	10.4%
Amount of Payments (gross millions)	\$27.4	\$26.8	\$22.7	2.2%	20.7%	\$54.2	\$46.7	16.1%
Exhaustions (Final Payments)	1,397	1,580	1,099	-11.6%	27.1%	2,977	2,530	17.7%



Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training

Quarterly Census of Rhode Island Employment & Wages

Third Quarter 2007 City/Town Analysis



Rhode Island total employment averaged 481,174 in the third quarter 2007, a decrease of 1,131 (-0.2%) jobs from the third quarter of 2006. All of the job declines were reported in the private sector, which lost 1,216 (-0.3%) positions. This marks the first third quarter year-over-year private sector decline since 2001. The government sector added 86 jobs (+0.1%) with 388 jobs being reported in local government, while state and federal government lost 193 and 109 positions respectively.

City/Town Analysis (Private sector)

Lincoln added 650 (+4.9%) private sector jobs between the third quarter of 2006 and third quarter of 2007, the largest employment gain among Rhode Island's thirty-nine cities and towns. Large employment gains within Lincoln were noted in the Arts, Entertainment & Recreation Services (+337), Finance & Insurance (+191) and Manufacturing (+131) sectors, with modest gains also reported in the Accommodation & Food Services (+76) and Construction (+43) sectors.

North Kingstown experienced the second largest employment increase, adding 412 (+3.2%) private sector jobs from the third quarter of 2006. The Health Care & Social Assistance and Administrative & Waste Services sectors added 138 and 129 jobs, respectively, while notable gains were also posted in the Manufacturing (+104) sector. Other cities and towns to report notable employment gains during this period were Coventry (+350), Bristol (+307) and Smithfield (+297).

Private sector employment in West Greenwich experienced a loss of 748 (-17.2%) positions between the third quarter of 2006 and third quarter of 2007, the largest employment decline among all Rhode Island communities. Most of the job decline can be attributed to the relocation of a large company from West Greenwich to another municipality. Significant employment declines were also reported in Cranston (-545), Johnston (-477), Providence (-420) and Warwick (-374).

In all, twenty communities reported employment growth between the third quarter of 2006 and third quarter 2007, while nineteen communities lost jobs during this period.

Private sector employees earned over \$4 billion in wages in the third quarter of 2007, a decrease of \$33 million (-0.8%) from the third quarter of 2006. The average weekly wage in the private sector decreased by \$4, from the \$730 earned in the third quarter of 2006 to the \$726 earned in the third quarter of 2007, a 0.6 percent decrease.

Employees working in West Greenwich earned an average weekly wage of \$1,107 in the third quarter of 2007, the highest private sector weekly wage among all Rhode Island cities and towns. Portsmouth (\$894), Providence (\$823), Smithfield (\$820) and Woonsocket (\$818) also reported sizable weekly earnings.

Quarterly bonuses and exercised stock options are included in the calculation and therefore may impact the average weekly wage.

Top Ten Cities and Towns by Average Employment – Private Sector Third Quarter 2007

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>Establishments</u>	<u>Average Employment</u>	<u>Total Wages</u>	<u>Average Weekly Wage</u>
Providence	5,606	97,217	\$1,040,414,507	\$823
Warwick	3,355	48,581	\$435,909,249	\$690
Cranston	2,638	29,380	\$256,691,207	\$672
Pawtucket	1,585	24,121	\$212,383,873	\$677
East Providence	1,543	21,298	\$193,447,839	\$699
Newport	1,294	14,455	\$115,277,589	\$613
Lincoln	775	13,895	\$139,018,989	\$770
Woonsocket	862	13,736	\$145,994,886	\$818
North Kingstown	1,051	13,386	\$128,758,525	\$740
Smithfield	822	12,675	\$135,070,621	\$820